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ABSTRACT

This report examines the history of the colonization of Arctic Canada and the efforts of its 25,000 Inuit residents to decolonize themselves. Initial sections outline the origins and early history of the Inuit; characteristics of Inuit culture, family life, and spirituality; the effects of whaling and the fur trade; and the movement of the Inuit into settlements and the wage economy in the 1950s and 1960s. Section 5 discusses the growth of Inuit political consciousness in the 1970s with regard to two major development projects: the James Bay hydroelectric project, which resulted in an agreement exchanging Native rights for a package of benefits, and the Mackenzie Valley pipeline, which led to Native groups calling for self-determination and a reexamination of their relationship to the federal government. Section 6 outlines the campaign for the creation of Nunavut, a new territory north of the treeline. Section 7 examines Inuit efforts to turn White institutions to their benefit, including educational reforms emphasizing community control and use of Native languages, Inuit radio and television programming, and attempts to develop a standard orthography for Inuktitut (Inupiaq). Final sections discuss the special circumstances of the Inuit in Labrador and the western Arctic, strategies for economic improvement, the status of Inuit land claims, and aboriginal negotiations regarding a new national constitution. (SV)

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THE INUIT (ESKIMO) OF CANADA

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- To help prevent, through publicity about violations of human rights, such problems from developing into dangerous and destructive conflicts which, when polarised, are very difficult to resolve; and
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THE INUIT (ESKIMO) OF CANADA

by Ian Creery

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THE UNITED NATIONS
UNIVERSAL DECLARATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS

Whereas recognition of the inherent dignity and of the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family is the foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world.

Whereas disregard and contempt for human rights have resulted in barbarous acts which have outraged the conscience of mankind, and the advent of a world in which human beings shall enjoy freedom of speech and belief and freedom from any fear and want has been proclaimed as the highest aspiration of the common people,

Whereas it is essential, if a man is not to be compelled to have recourse, as a last resort, to rebellion against tyranny and oppression, that human rights should be protected by the rule of law,

Whereas it is essential to promote the development of friendly relations between nations,

Whereas the peoples of the United Nations have in the Charter reaffirmed their faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person and in the equal rights of men and women and have determined to promote social progress and better standards of life in larger freedom,

Whereas Member States have pledged themselves to achieve, in co-operation with the United Nations, the promotion of universal respect for and observance of human rights and fundamental freedoms,

Whereas a common understanding of these rights and freedoms is of the greatest importance for the full realization of this pledge,

Now, Therefore,

THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY
proclaims

THIS UNIVERSAL DECLARATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS as a common standard of achievement for all peoples and all nations, to the end that every individual and every organ of society, keeping this Declaration constantly in mind, shall strive by teaching and education to promote respect for these rights and freedoms and by progressive measures, national and international, to secure their universal and effective recognition and observance, both among the peoples of Member States themselves and among the peoples of territories under their jurisdiction.

Article 1. All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood.

Article 2. Everyone is entitled to all the rights and freedoms set forth in this Declaration, without distinction of any kind, such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status.

Furthermore, no distinction shall be made on the basis of the political, jurisdictional or international status of the country or territory to which a person belongs, whether it be independent, trust, non-self-governing or under any other limitation of sovereignty.

Article 3. Everyone has the right to life, liberty and security of person.

Article 4. No one shall be held in slavery or servitude; slavery and the slave trade shall be prohibited in all their forms.

Article 5. No one shall be subjected to torture or to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment.

Article 6. Everyone has the right to recognition everywhere as a person before the law.

Article 7. All are equal before the law and are entitled without any discrimination to equal protection of the law. All are entitled to equal protection against any discrimination in violation of this Declaration and against any incitement to such discrimination.

Article 8. Everyone has the right to an effective remedy by the competent national tribunals for acts violating the fundamental rights granted him by the constitution or by law.

Article 9. No one shall be subjected to arbitrary arrest, detention or exile.

Article 10. Everyone is entitled in full equality to a fair and public hearing by an independent and impartial tribunal, in the determination of his rights and obligations and of any criminal charge against him.

Article 11. (1) Everyone charged with a penal offence has the right to be presumed innocent until proved guilty according to law in a public trial at which he has had all the guarantees necessary for his defence.

(2) No one shall be held guilty of any penal offence on account of any act or omission which did not constitute a penal offence, under national or international law, at the time when it was committed. Nor shall a heavier penalty be imposed than the one that was applicable at the time the penal offence was committed.

Article 12. No one shall be subjected to arbitrary interference with his privacy, family, home or correspondence, nor to attacks upon his honour and reputation. Everyone has the right to the protection of the law against such interference or attacks.

Article 13. (1) Everyone has the right to freedom of movement and residence within the borders of each state.

(2) Everyone has the right to leave any country, including his own, and to return to his country.

Article 14. (1) Everyone has the right to seek and to enjoy in other countries asylum from persecution.

(2) This right may not be invoked in the case of prosecutions genuinely arising from non-political crimes or from acts contrary to the purposes and principles of the United Nations.

Article 15. (1) Everyone has the right to a nationality.

(2) No one shall be arbitrarily deprived of his nationality nor denied the right to change his nationality.

Article 16. (1) Men and women of full age, without any limitation due to race, nationality or religion, have the right to marry and to found a family. They are entitled to equal rights as to marriage, during marriage and at its dissolution.

(2) Marriage shall be entered into only with the free and full consent of the intending spouses.

(3) The family is the natural and fundamental group unit of society and is entitled to protection by society and the State.

Article 17. (1) Everyone has the right to own property alone as well as in association with others.

(2) No one shall be arbitrarily deprived of his property.

Article 18. Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion; this right includes freedom to change his religion or belief, and freedom, either alone or in community with others and in public or private, to manifest his religion or belief in teaching, practice, worship and observance.

Article 19. Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers.

Article 20. (1) Everyone has the right to freedom of peaceful assembly and association.

(2) No one may be compelled to belong to an association.

Article 21. (1) Everyone has the right to take part in the government of his country, directly or through freely chosen representatives.

(2) Everyone has the right of equal access to public service in his country.

(3) The will of the people shall be the basis of the authority of government; this will shall be expressed in periodic and genuine elections which shall be by universal and equal suffrage and shall be held by secret vote or by equivalent free voting procedures.

Article 22. Everyone, as a member of society, has the right to social security and is entitled to realization, through national effort and international co-operation and in accordance with the organization and resources of each State, of the economic, social and cultural rights indispensable for his dignity and the free development of his personality.

Article 23. (1) Everyone has the right to work, to free choice of employment, to just and favourable conditions of work and to protection against unemployment.

(2) Everyone, without any discrimination, has the right to equal pay for equal work.

(3) Everyone who works has the right to just and favourable remuneration ensuring for himself and his family an existence worthy of human dignity, and supplemented, if necessary, by other means of social protection.

(4) Everyone has the right to form and to join trade unions for the protection of his interest.

Article 24. Everyone has the right to rest and leisure, including reasonable limitation of working hours and periodic holidays with pay.

Article 25. (1) Everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself and of his family, including food, clothing, housing and medical care and necessary social services, and the right to security in the event of unemployment, sickness, disability, widowhood, old age or other lack of livelihood in circumstances beyond his control.

(2) Motherhood and childhood are entitled to special care and assistance. All children, whether born in or out of wedlock, shall enjoy the same social protection.

Article 26. (1) Everyone has the right to education. Education shall be free, at least in the elementary and fundamental stages. Elementary education shall be compulsory. Technical and professional education shall be made generally available and higher education shall be equally accessible to all on the basis of merit.

(2) Education shall be directed to the full development of the human personality and to the strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. It shall promote understanding, tolerance and friendship among all nations, racial or religious groups, and shall further the activities of the United Nations for the maintenance of peace.

(3) Parents have a prior right to choose the kind of education that shall be given to their children.

Article 27. (1) Everyone has the right freely to participate in the cultural life of the community, to enjoy the arts and to share in scientific advancement and its benefits.

(2) Everyone has the right to the protection of the moral and material interests resulting from any scientific, literary or artistic production of which he is the author.

Article 28. Everyone is entitled to a social and international order in which the rights and freedoms set forth in this Declaration can be fully realized.

Article 29. (1) Everyone has duties to the community in which alone the free and full development of his personality is possible.

(2) In the exercise of his rights and freedoms, everyone shall be subject only to such limitations as are determined by law solely for the purpose of securing due recognition and respect for the rights and freedoms of others and of meeting the just requirements of morality, public order and the general welfare in a democratic society.

(3) These rights and freedoms may in no case be exercised contrary to the purposes and principles of the United Nations.

Article 30. Nothing in this Declaration may be interpreted as implying for any State, group or person any right to engage in any activity or to perform any act aimed at the destruction of any of the rights and freedoms set forth herein.

THE INUIT (ESKIMO) OF CANADA
by Ian Creery

1. INTRODUCTION

How many people know that the Inuit are the Arctic people of Siberia, Alaska, Canada and Greenland? The rest of the world has always called them Eskimo – the word 'Eskimo' actually comes from an Algonkian Indian word meaning 'he eats it raw' – but in recent years the Eskimo people have become more aware of their place in the world, and like other colonized groups have refused to be known by their colonial labels. They have chosen the term 'Inuit', meaning simply 'the people' in their language, and in Canada at least this has been generally accepted.

There are a total of about 100,000 Inuit in the circumpolar world – some 1,500 in Siberia, 30,000 in Alaska, 25,000 in Canada and 42,000 in Greenland. They speak two main languages of the Eskaleut language family – Yupik in Siberia and southwest Alaska, and Inupiaq from north Alaska right across to Greenland.

This Report focuses on the Inuit of Canada. It will examine the history of the colonization of the Arctic, and the efforts the Inuit are making to decolonize themselves. It will also touch on the development of the Inuit circumpolar movement.

2. ORIGINS

The first humans are thought to have arrived in North America about 30,000 B.C. The last Ice Age stretched from 30,000-15,000 B.C., covering most of Arctic Canada with glaciers. The huge mass of water frozen into this glaciation had led to a dropping of the sea level, draining the Bering Sea and exposing a land bridge between Siberia and Alaska. The hunters that followed the herds of game across this bridge were the ancestors of the present-day Indian populations of North and South America. About 15,000 B.C. the glaciers began to melt, and the Bering Sea encroached on the land bridge. Shortly before it disappeared about 10,000 B.C., a last wave of migration occurred, and these people may have been the ancestors of the Inuit.

The first migration north of the treeline from northern Alaska through Canada to Greenland started about 2000 B.C. and lasted until 800 B.C. These migrants were the first to adapt to the Arctic environment but they appear to have died out around 1000 A.D. for reasons that remain unknown, and were replaced by the direct ancestors of modern Inuit. These people arrived in a second wave of migration from Alaska, showing a much more sophisticated technology, and one more adapted to hunting large marine mammals such as whales, than the previous occupants. They spread rapidly across the north, profiting from a warming period in the Arctic climate and from the abundance of whales. They had reached a high level of adaptation to their environment and lived in security, exhibiting a rich material and spiritual culture, when a cooling trend set in near 1200 A.D., culminating in the Little Ice Age from 1600-1850. Arctic populations have always expanded and contracted with the climate – even a small cooling period could affect numbers and availability of the animals and birds that Inuit depended on for survival, and starvation was never far away during these times. During the Little Ice Age some parts of the Arctic could no longer support the Inuit, and they drew back into the areas they occupied at the time the Canadian Government took an interest in them.

Primitives?

A persistent myth, engendered by the first Europeans to come into contact with the Inuit, labelled them as 'primitives' – children of nature, existing at a basic level of survival. They were 'savages', and lived in poverty – material, cultural and linguistic. The 'civilized' European view was – as it too often remains today – that different meant inferior, and the Europeans could not understand the sophistication evident in the Inuit's adaptation to life in a harsh environment. (James Wilson describes the Inuit culture as 'in reality one of the most sophisticated adaptations to environment known to anthropology'.) This blinkered view had drastic consequences for some early explorers who were shipwrecked in the Arctic. Rather than accept that Inuit knew their land and could help them (as other, wiser explorers admitted), they attempted to save themselves and perished.

It is evident from archaeological finds that long before any contact with Europeans, Inuit had attained a high stage of development relative to their world. Robert McGhee, a Canadian archaeologist, said of the Old Bering Sea culture of about 2000 years ago:

'Living between two worlds (Alaska and Siberia), with a technology that gave them an abundant and secure economy, they developed a way of life that was probably as rich as any other in the nonagricultural and nonindustrial world.'

And contemporary Inuit culture is far from the sad remains of the glorious past:

'Rather, it should be seen as the result of a recent attempt to maintain the basic elements of a rich and sophisticated culture that could no longer be supported in the deteriorating arctic environment of the past three hundred years.'

What characterized that culture? At the time of European contact, the Inuit lived as semi-nomadic hunters. They moved from camp to camp according to the seasons and following the availability of game (almost their only food source), but within a defined area. Within these areas, hunters travelled constantly at all seasons, and sometimes were forced to move on long journeys with their families as animals became scarce in one region. Nearly all the Inuit depended for food and clothing on marine mammals – bowhead whale, beluga or white whale, narwhale, walrus and seal – although caribou and fish were also important at certain times of the year. The Inuit, with few exceptions, were a truly maritime people. They harvested their food from the sea, as well as travelling over it in winter and summer. Their spiritual culture took inspiration from the sea too: the most important being in their cosmology was a goddess, Taleelayo, who lived at the bottom of the sea.

The important social unit was the family, and camps usually consisted of several related families in informal association. In winter the camps would split up in order to make the most of scarce game, and the families would come together again in spring and summer to hunt co-operatively. It was common to marry outside the loose camp grouping to avoid inbreeding, but also to create links which would minimize feuding between groups. The adoption of children between families was common, and contributed to social cohesion.

The Inuit governed themselves by a flexible system based on consensus. They took decisions affecting camp life by proposing a point of view and then modifying it through discussion until everyone could accept it. Each camp had a leader, usually a man, who had superior abilities as a hunter and who influenced greatly the decision-making process. The leaders were strongwilled, sometimes visionary: a good example is Qillaq, who through sheer force of personality persuaded some 38 Inuit to follow him in the 1850s from the Pond Inlet area on a hazardous migration to north Greenland. The leader's authority lay only in their own characters, and at any point those who disagreed with them could opt out, to join another group or to start their own.

The Inuit lived a precarious existence, sensing themselves beset by natural and supernatural forces they could not control. Their religion was shamanism, which was described simply by the Igloolik shaman Aua: 'We do not believe, we fear . . .' They believed that the world was populated by spirits both good and evil, which could only be influenced through the mediation of the shamans. The shamans' training was usually long and rigorous, involving a period of exposure to cold, fasting and privation to develop mystical powers. They interpreted the natural world, cured sickness and advised on hunting problems, aided by a variety of mystical activity and by a system of taboos.

The Inuit had no writing system, but a rich and resonant oral tradition of passing on legends, songs, parables and hunting narratives. Many of these had shamanistic overtones, but some of the songs have an almost Zen-like quality:

I arise from rest
With the beat of a raven's wings.
I arise
to meet the day.

My eyes turn from the night
To gaze at the dawn
Now whitening.

3. COLONIZATION

The first Europeans to set foot in North America were most likely Vikings about 1000 years ago. Erik the Red had successfully colonized Greenland, and further explorations took him across Davis Strait to Baffin Island. Viking interest was short-lived however, according to archaeological evidence.

Starting about 1200 A.D. various other Europeans made the long voyage across the Atlantic via Iceland to exploit the huge fish stocks off Newfoundland, and some of them may briefly have turned north. The next visitors to the Arctic were explorers looking for the northern route to the Indies – the Northwest Passage. The motivation of their employers was strictly commercial, as was that of the fur traders of the Hudson's Bay Company, who began to explore the north to develop its fur harvest. From 1818 to 1859 the British Admiralty sent several expeditions to map the Arctic and again to seek the Northwest Passage. However, the first to colonize and exploit the north in systematic fashionn were American and Scottish whalers during the 19th century. They ranged the east coast of Baffin Island, and by the 1850s started spending the winters there as well as the summers. They were voracious in their search for the bowhead whale, and by the middle of the century had rendered this species quite scarce. They then turned to the exploitation of the white whale (beluga) and decimated that population. It is estimated that between 1868 and 1911 Scottish whalers alone took more than 20,000 belugas from Davis Strait, and that figure does not include the catch of American commercial whalers or Inuit hunters. On the other side of the continent, American whalers followed the herds of whales along the north coast of Alaska and by 1890 reached the Beaufort Sea in the western Arctic. In little more than a decade they took over $30 million worth of whale products and succeeded in almost wiping out the whales.

The whalers were the first to have a substantial economic interest in the north, and so began to directly affect the lives of nearby Inuit. The Inuit lived along the coast, and had tremendous knowledge of the water and of the whales that inhabited it. The whalers pressed them into service on their ships in search of the whale, they paid them in wages for this work, they traded for other local goods, and some took Inuit wives during their stay.

The decline in the economic value of the whale hunt drove some of the whalers back south, and the ones that stayed took up the fur trade instead. The fur trade had been the economic foundation of Canada, and by the turn of the 19th century the traders were increasingly searching for fresh sources of fur. The Hudson's Bay Company was the most important commercial interest, and set up its first Arctic post in northern Quebec in 1909. According to sociologist Peter Usher, '. . . within 15 years the distribution of trading posts and indeed the course of future settlement was virtually set for the entire Eastern Arctic.' The fur trade forced the Inuit into a symbiotic relationship with the traders: they forsook their traditional hunting ways (in which trapping was unimportant) to trap the furs that would get them trade goods – guns, bullets, knives, flour, tea and tobacco. This had a highly significant effect on their way of life. As old hunting techniques fell into disuse in the rush to trap the white fox, the Inuit had to depend more and more on guns to keep food on the table. In the excitement of having guns some Inuit had killed many more animals than they needed and later on game became harder to find. Fur prices rose and fell, and during lean years many of them were at the mercy of traders. In the late 1940s fur prices collapsed, bringing the trade to a halt in the Arctic. Many posts closed, leaving the Inuit unable to go back to their old hunting way of life, but subsisting precariously in a mixed economy. It was at this point that the Canadian Government finally took up its responsibilities to them.

4. GOVERNMENTAL INTEREST AND INVOLVEMENT

In 1670 Britain granted the Canadian Arctic to the Hudson's Bay Company as part of Rupert's Land. The Company owned the land until it gave it up in 1870 to the new Canadian Government, which renamed it the Northwest Territories. Canada had adopted the federal system of government, with powers divided between the Federal Government and the provinces of Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island, New Brunswick, Quebec, Ontario and British Columbia. The Northwest Territories included all the rest of Canada as far north as the Arctic. It was undeveloped politically and was administered by the Federal Government until it could develop sufficiently to be granted provincial status. The settlers pushing westwards were quick to demand political responsibility, and first Manitoba, then Saskatchewan and Alberta were carved out of the Northwest Territories as new provinces. In 1912 Parliament extended Quebec's boundary north to include the Ungava district and the Inuit that lived there. The Inuit of Labrador were still under British rule but in 1949 they joined Confederation as part of the province of Newfoundland. Thus in the Northwest Territories the Inuit were entirely a federal responsibility, but in Quebec and Labrador responsibility for them was divided between the federal and provincial governments, and they were often the victims of disputes between the two levels of government.

The Canadian Government wanted the north because it saw the potential value of the land and its resources to the Canadian economy. Other countries were also interested and their conflicting claims forced Canada to establish and then defend its sovereignty in the Arctic. For this reason more than any other, the Federal Government sent the police to set up posts. It was also obliged to extend the rule of law to protect and administer the Eurocanadian traders, whalers and missionaries who had settled there.

It is clear the Canadian Government did not consider the Inuit to constitute a nation that would have to be dealt with, by treaty or by force, in the process of taking their land. Their ostensible appearance of primitiveness, the nomadic quality of their life and lack of formal institutions, and their small population in such a vast land all contributed to this attitude. Ironically, the Inuit may have helped to perpetuate this idea by their own charitable natures. Generally they welcomed the Europeans that arrived on their shores. They extended help to early explorers, indeed went out of their way to save them from starvation after shipwrecks. They guided them where they wanted to go, and co-operated uncomplainingly as the whalers depleted the stocks. This willingness to share, this obligation to care for foreigners not as capable of survival as themselves, has persisted to the present day – and the Inuit are proud of it. But it led the Government to assume that they had no strong feelings of nationhood or of attachment to their country, so there was no need to obtain their approval before taking their land for Canada.

The only reason the Government had recognized the nationhood of the Canadian Indians was to make it easier to deal with them. By acknowledging them as nations, it could negotiate and sign treaties with them to obtain their land for the expansion of Canadian settlements westwards. It signed treaties with the Indians of the Northwest Territories for economic reasons: Treaty 8 in 1899 paved the way for the Klondike Gold Rush in the Yukon, and Treaty 11 in 1921 came about because of the discovery of oil and gas in the Mackenzie Valley. There was a half-hearted attempt to include a group of Inuit in Treaty 11, but when they refused this offer it was abandoned. At that time the Arctic barrens seemed empty, limitless and worthless. There was no need for the land, and thus no need to consider who actually might have owned it.

The Federal Government had annexed the Arctic, and the Inuit were now unwittingly citizens of Canada, but the Government had not accomplished this out of any coherent policy toward the land and its people. It did so because it was forced to, and carried out its duties as minimally and as reluctantly as possible. A comment of Louis St. Laurent, Prime Minister of Canada from 1948-57, sums up the involvement during this period: 'Apparently we have administered the vast territories of the north in a continuous state of absence of mind.'

By the late 1940s many Inuit had reached a desperate state. Epidemics had periodically swept through their camps, and the collapse of the fur trade put the trade goods they now needed out of reach. To top it off, in the early 1950s some animal migration patterns changed drastically, leading to widespread starvation. The Government was caught unaware. It had developed virtually no social policy for the Arctic, preferring to entrust the welfare and education of the Inuit to the traders and the missionaries. This was all the more remarkable when contrasted with the Danish Government's enlightened and comprehensive policy towards Greenland, developed in the 1780s. The Government had to do something, and it reacted massively. It airdropped supplies of food to the starving, and started moving Inuit groups away from their camps to places (usually trading posts) where they could be properly administered.

Some hunters remembered that at this time, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police shot the dog teams they used for transport, ostensibly to control rabies but also to stop the Inuit from moving back to their camps. The Government embarked on an energetic programme of building housing and schools, improving health care, and setting up local Eskimo Councils in order to encourage the growth of local government. The results were dramatic. From 1941 to 1971 the infant mortality rate dropped from 208.9 to 49.9 per thousand, the death rate went from 25.6 to 6.6, and the rate of natural increase rose from 0.8 to 30.4. In one generation, the Inuits' living conditions had been tremendously improved, but the move off the land had an even greater impact on their lives than the fur trade. Their semi-nomadic life had become settled, they had gone from living in camps of two or three families to settlements of 50 families, and they were entering the wage economy.

The decade of the 1960s gave the Inuit time to adjust to their new circumstances. They had to get used to living in houses, to sending their children to school, to the idea that somehow their freedom had been curtailed. They had become wards of the Federal Government, and found that the new material comfort had been achieved at the expense of their self-confidence. As they settled into new surroundings, they found themselves neighbours to strangers, perhaps to people that spoke a different dialect. However, they were grateful for the help they had been given, and were anxious to participate as fully as possible in running the new settlements.

The Federal Government felt that it had a political as well as social responsibility for the Inuit, and in 1967 established the Government of the Northwest Territories in Yellowknife, under the authority of the federal Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development. The new territorial Government took over the administration of some federal services and immediately concentrated on the development of local government.

The Inuit were willing to learn, but did not understand the nature of the institutions they now had to deal with. They could not just take over town administration from the white people, but would have to learn how the process worked first. All over the Arctic, Inuit formed local councils, to which authority was doled out in small parcels. Inevitably the councils would not understand their limits, and would propose changes, important to them, but which the Government still could not trust them to carry out. The initial result of this programme was that Inuit leaders became frustrated. Faced with this seemingly impenetrable wall of governmental authority, many of them just let the white people have their way, and abandoned any sense of responsibility for their affairs. This served to confirm the impressions of white civil servants that the Inuit had become a dependent people who had lost control of their lives. It was necessary to take upon themselves once more the responsibility for their 'wards', and the circle was complete.

The Inuit found themselves well and truly caught in the colonizer's trap. Their right to self-government had been abrogated during the move into settlements, and the new administrators made it plain that the only way to regain control lay in assimilation into the greater southern culture. The alternative of moving back to the land was dropping farther out of reach, as the Inuit could no longer afford the white man's goods they had become used to. In addition, the Inuit right to hunt freely was being eroded, as the Government set restrictive quotas on the hunting of some animals such as the polar bear.

The Inuit gradually realized that their lives were becoming circumscribed by rules and regulations, often designed with well-meaning paternalism to protect them from the outside world, and from themselves. As well, there were more storm clouds on the horizon: in 1968, oil was discovered in Prudhoe Bay, Alaska, and there was a great rush of speculation in Canada that the Beaufort Sea in the western Arctic, and other parts of the high Arctic, held important reserves of oil and natural gas as well. Suddenly, Inuit land was worth money, and it brought into sharp focus the state of development of the north.

5. THE GROWTH OF INUIT POLITICAL CONSCIOUSNESS

It would still be some time before the Government and the Inuit came into direct conflict, but by the late 1960s many Inuit were awakening to the fact that important decisions were being made which would affect their future. The western Arctic had already had more experience of this than the east. Development of natural resources, and the search for more, had moved down the natural corridor of the Mackenzie Valley to the delta giving onto the Beaufort Sea. White men had already reached this part of the Inuit homeland in great numbers, and the Alaskan oil discoveries stimulated exploration in the Beaufort Sea. In 1969, the Inuit of the area formed a political organization, the first of its kind in the Arctic, to defend their rights before they were swamped in the rush of development. It was called COPE – Committee for Original People's Entitlement. It was followed in 1971 by the formation of a national Inuit organization, called the Inuit Tapirisat of Canada or ITC, and meaning 'Inuit Brotherhood'.

The people who formed these organizations did so out of goodwill, out of a conviction that the Government just needed good advice from Inuit to rectify some of the mistakes that had already been made. However, the federal Government department responsible for all Inuit and Indians in Canada, the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, had been created during the days when no co-ordinated northern policy existed, and it did not seem possible that Indian and Inuit interests would become an obstacle to the development of natural resources. DIAND had always taken seriously its mandate to regulate the development of resources, but had almost ignored its responsibility to represent the native people. This attitude was still prevalent when the Inuit Tapirisat was formed, and it found the Department more an adversary than an ally in its struggle for recognition.

Although they had never stated it explicitly, the Inuit considered that their aboriginal rights and the right to self-determination had never been surrendered. However, a Government policy document, the White Paper of 1969, had refused to recognize aboriginal rights. In that same year, the Nishga Indians of British Columbia took their provincial Government to court, suing for recognition of these rights. The case eventually reached the Supreme Court of Canada, and six of the judges on the panel were divided evenly on the issue. The seventh judge tipped the balance by dismissing the case on a technicality, but the point had been made. The federal Government was forced to reconsider its policy, and admitted that 'perhaps' aboriginal rights did exist. However unwillingly, it did commit itself to settling outstanding claims.

COPE and the ITC wasted no time in formulating a proposal. They started from the position that their rights had never been surrendered by conquest or by treaty, and that in exchange for giving them up, they were entitled to compensation of various kinds. They proposed the compensation take the form of land grants, money, hunting and certain other limited rights, but stopped short of demanding political powers. The Inuit had not yet properly analysed the nature of their relationship with the Government, and thought that the proposal would enable them to maintain their way of life. In some ways it was similar to the Alaska Native Claims Act of 1971, which was generous in its economic provisions, but had as its ultimate purpose the assimilation of native people into the mainstream culture. The ITC/COPE document failed to consider who would control the north, and how Inuit could gain the power to run their own lives. The proposal was ratified at a general assembly representing all the Inuit in the N.W.T. in November 1975, and presented to the Canadian Government for negotiation in February of 1976. Already many Inuit were voicing doubts about its contents, because of several related happenings in other parts of the north.

(i) James Bay: In April 1971, the Premier of Quebec, Robert Bourassa, announced the James Bay hydro-electric project, which would generate fully 30% of Canada's current power production by damming all the major rivers flowing into James Bay from the eastern (Quebec) side, in three phases. Phase 1 alone, to dam the La Grande river, was estimated to cost $5.8 billion, and the series of reservoirs would stretch for almost 500 miles.

The land of the Cree Indians and the Inuit had been ceded to Quebec from the Northwest Territories in 1912, but the province did not want responsibility for the Inuit, and in the 1930s took the federal Government to court, claiming that in fact the Inuit should be classed as Indians and were therefore a federal responsibility. This was upheld by the courts in 1939, and so the native people were administered entirely from Ottawa. Finally, in 1963 the Quebec Government took up its provincial duties in the north, and the native people now had to deal with two governments instead of one. They were hunters like their relatives in the N.W.T., and had

experienced the same stress and strain in the change to the new life. However, the James Bay project was on a different scale altogether. It would have enormous consequences – an army of foreign workers would occupy their land, the land itself would be flooded, and there would be other serious environmental consequences. And yet the provincial Government had not even consulted them about these plans, and had done very little work on the environmental impact of such a gigantic scheme.

In May of 1972 the province approved the project, and work started almost immediately. The Cree and the Inuit, having failed politically to stop it, applied in December 1972 for a court injunction to temporarily halt work on the dams while the courts decided on the nature of their rights. On 15 November 1973 the injunction was granted, but eight days later it was overturned by the Appeals Court. The Government was now worried that the work would be stopped by further appeals; the Cree and Inuit were desperate because the project was already far advanced, and court costs were astronomical. The two sides agreed to negotiate, and in a year of hard bargaining came to an agreement in principle. The Inuit were unhappy with it, but the only alternative was to get nothing. The James Bay Final Agreement was signed a year later.

The Agreement was similar to the Alaska Native Claims Act in that it was concerned with making a once-and-for-all deal that would exchange native rights for a package of benefits, thus freeing the land for development. The package of benefits included: $90 million in cash, title to 5,250 square miles of hunting grounds, exclusive hunting and fishing rights on a further 60,000 square miles, and various social programmes. The social programmes carried a perpetual governmental responsibility, but did not substantially increase the power of the Inuit to control their lives.

(ii) The Mackenzie Valley Pipeline: Shortly after the discovery of oil and gas in Alaska, the Canadian Government offered to permit the building of a pipeline through the Mackenzie Valley to carry oil to the United States markets. The American Government declined the offer, and so the Canadians decided that perhaps a gas pipeline would be more attractive. It would transport both American and Canadian Arctic gas through the Valley, and an oil pipeline could also be added if enough reserves of Canadian oil were discovered. A consortium of energy companies called Canadian Arctic Gas announced its project in March 1974: a pipeline stretching from the Mackenzie Delta 2,625 miles to the South, at an estimated cost of $10 billion. In 1975 the National Energy Board of Canada started hearings to determine the feasibility of the project. By the autumn of 1976 three other consortia had filed competing applications to build pipelines, and the National Energy Board added their proposals to the list.

Like the Cree and Inuit of James Bay, the Indians of the Mackenzie Valley felt threatened by such an overwhelming project. They had experienced the influx of great numbers of foreigners from the times of the Yukon gold rush, and their culture had suffered accordingly. They too had realized that activism was the only way of safeguarding their rights, and had formed their own political organization, the Indian Brotherhood, to represent them. The Brotherhood began to understand the colonial nature of government in the N.W.T., and absorbed the lessons being offered in decolonization in parts of the Third World. It was concerned that the National Energy Board only had the mandate to consider physical questions related to the building of the pipeline – economic, technical, environmental – and could not go into its social impact. The Brotherhood lobbied urgently to allow the native people to express their views, and the Government finally agreed. In March 1974, it appointed the widely respected Justice Thomas Berger of the Supreme Court of British Columbia to inquire into the effects of a pipeline on the people of the Valley and, if necessary, to suggest conditions under which it should be built.

The Berger Inquiry held exhaustive hearings in the north, and acted as a catalyst for the slowly-developing political views of the Mackenzie Valley Indians. They spoke unanimously against the building of the pipeline, and Justive Berger eventually recommended to the federal Government that the pipeline be delayed for ten years to allow the Indians to settle land claims and to prepare for the project.

The Indians felt vindicated by the conclusions of the Inquiry. As in James Bay, they too had gone to court to stop development on their land based on their aboriginal rights to it, had obtained a favourable judgement only to see it overturned in appeal. They had started negotiations with the federal Government to settle their land claim in exchange for the extinguishing of their aboriginal rights. They had started calling themselves the Dene (meaning in their language 'the people') instead of 'Indians'. And as they came to understand the language of Third World liberation movements, they applied it to their situation. They repudiated the idea that their rights could be extinguished, and in 1975 the Dene Assembly unanimously adopted the Dene Declaration, which said among other things:

'*We the Dene of the N.W.T. insist on the right to be regarded by ourselves and the world as a nation. And while there are realities we are forced to submit to, such as the existence of a country called Canada, we insist on the right to self-determination as a district people and the recognition of the Dene Nation.*'

The Dene Declaration changed the nature of their relationship with the Government of Canada, and they submitted a different proposal for the settlement of rights. It is still being negotiated.

The Inuit of the N.W.T. had observed the negotiation of the James Bay Agreement and the Dene struggle against the Mackenzie Valley pipeline, and now had to choose between two kinds of negotiation of their own claims with the federal Government. The first type would extinguish aboriginal rights in return for a negotiated package of benefits, such as land, money, hunting rights and some social programmes. The underlying assumption was that aboriginal rights were limited, involving rights to hunting and perhaps to some property, but not to any political powers. It was assumed that the fundamental basis of the relationship between the Government and the native people had already been established, and it was just a matter of settling some outstanding claims. This kind of agreement has been called a 'real-estate deal'. The Alaska Native Claims Act and the James Bay Agreement are of this type.

The second type would re-examine the relationship between the Government and the native people, starting from the premise that the right to self-determination had never been surrendered. This would serve as the basis for an agreement which would specify the political rights they could exercise, and would also include some compensation for past wrongs. It would initiate a process by which the native people would maintain (in some cases recover) control over their lives, while giving up sovereignty over their lands. The Dene Declaration was a start in this direction.

The Federal Government, however, held that the James Bay Agreement in Quebec was 'historical' and would serve as a precedent for the settlement of all other land claims. It wanted to maintain complete political control, and would not allow the subject of the sharing of political power to come up within the framework of claims negotiations.

The Inuit of COPE and ITC realized that the proposal they were about to negotiate with the Government was of the 'real-estate' variety. They had had time to analyse the James Bay Agreement, and saw how inadequate it was to their needs. They decided to withdraw the proposal and to start work on another. This time, the Inuit decided, the proposal would come out of community discussions rather than from legal consultants. The document that was ratified at a General Assembly in Frobisher Bay in October 1977 was a simple one that went back to first principles. It also bore the influence of the Dene Declaration. Two pages long, it started off:

'Whereas the Inuit and the Goverment of Canada have never had an agreement with regard to the constitutional relationship between the Inuit and Canada; . . .'

The most important feature of the document was that the Inuit wanted to negotiate:

'. . . the formation of a new territory and government within Canada Confederation along the lines of Inuit political institutions.'

6. THE ROAD TO NUNAVUT

The idea of dividing the Northwest Territories into two new territories had been proposed in 1962, but the Federal Government had not thought that the Inuit in the eastern part of the N.W.T. were ready for it. Fifteen years later, the Inuit themselves brought the idea up again. They argued that there was a natural division in the N.W.T. anyway, along the treeline which ran from the Mackenzie Delta diagonally to the N.W.T.-Manitoba border. It separated the tundra, land of the Inuit, from the forests that were the home of the Dene. The climates of the two regions were different; they had

different histories and cultures. The Inuit argued that the N.W.T. included two regions and people that would always remain different. The capital of the N.W.T., Yellowknife, lay south of the treeline and was run by white civil servants who had no comprehension of the Inuit and their land. The Inuit saw the land claims negotiation with the Federal Government as an opportunity to push for more representative government closer to them. Accordingly, they proposed division along the treeline, with a new government in the eastern territory, which would be called Nunavut – 'our land'.

The Inuit knew that their population majority of about 75% in Nunavut would ensure that the new government would represent them, but more importantly they could negotiate new powers for it, not held presently by the N.W.T. Government. They denied strenuously that they were proposing an ethnic state; the new system would be public government within the limits defined by the Canadian Constitution. The only safeguard of Inuit rights was the proposal that the normal residency requirement of one year for participating in Canadian elections be raised to three years. The Inuit said this would limit the ability of the north's large transient white population (average length of stay perhaps two years) to exercise undue influence.

The Inuit Tapirisat of Canada embarked on a campaign to publicize its proposals. Most people they canvassed, including many white civil servants who had to deal with Yellowknife daily, agreed that the N.W.T. Government was remote and unresponsive to their needs. They accepted easily the idea of a division along the treeline, and saw the opportunity for reform of the system of government at the same time. The Inuit saw a clear need for the protection offered by a three-year residency requirement before voting, and some long-term white residents agreed. Others were quick to call the proposal unconstitutional, and it remains the most controversial aspect of the Nunavut plan.

The Federal Government responded to the proposed creation of Nunavut by reiterating that political development was not a subject that could be included in land claims negotiations. It stuck firmly by its original position that the James Bay approach would be followed. The Canadian Prime Minister, Pierre Trudeau, recognized that the north was in a political ferment, and could see that the native groups would not agree to abandon their ideas of negotiating political rights. He attempted to defuse the situation by appointing an inquiry into constitutional development in the north, under the Hon. C.M. Drury, a former Cabinet Minister. Mr. Drury set up his inquiry and came north to investigate. He talked to many northerners, including civil servants, but found that all the native groups boycotted his investigation. This took away a lot of its significance, and he made his recommendations before going back south. Lost in the general embarrassment at the political failure of the Inquiry were some reasonable suggestions, including one that sooner or later the N.W.T. would have to be divided in two.

The ITC had stated that the Drury Inquiry had no power to make changes to the political map, and was not even obligated to take its ideas into account. The ITC still wanted to negotiate its proposals through land claims, and refused any compromise. Inuit in Canada were greatly encouraged when, in 1979, Greenland was granted home rule by Denmark. The new form of government would give Greenlanders much increased autonomy, with the Inuit majority exercising democratic control, as they would in the proposed territory of Nunavut.

In Canada, when the N.W.T. Government expressed a new willingness to work for real change, and the native groups were quick to seize the opportunity. Native political leaders dropped their boycott of the elected N.W.T. Council, and in October 1979 a native majority was elected. The first act of the new Council was to reverse the pro-development, anti-native rights stance of the previous Council. It then examined the Nunavut proposal, as well as a similar Dene proposal, for the western part of the N.W.T. It set up a Unity Committee which held hearings across the North to evaluate the depth of feeling for division. The Committee reported back to the Council that the evidence was overwhelmingly in favour of a split. The Council debated the issue, and almost unanimously endorsed division. It then held a plebiscite of all residents of the N.W.T. on the question, and on 14 April 1982 got its answer. Most Inuit communities voted 80% in favour of division, although support was lower in some settlements in the western Arctic. South of the treeline the result was mixed, with a small majority in favour. The overall result was the 60% wanted the N.W.T. to be divided. The Council and the native groups, now working closely together, carried the results to Ottawa and pressed for an early Federal decision on the matter. In November of 1982 John Munro, the Minister for Indian and Northern Affairs, announced that, subject to certain conditions, the N.W.T. would indeed be divided.

7. THE QUIET REVOLUTION

In the generation since the move into settlements, the Inuit have come to understand the Canadian political system. They have shown themselves to be tough, capable politicians, as the success of the campaign for the new Nunavut territory demonstrates.

Much has been written about the destructive effects of colonialism on aboriginal societies, and the Inuit have experienced many problems: the breakdown of social and family bonds, the loss of culture, alcoholism and suicide, corruption. However, these problems have not been as severe as in other parts of the world for at least two reasons: first, the Inuit have been spared a massive influx of southerners, because their land has been so unattractive to most whites. They have remained greatly in the majority, and have been able to control southern influence to some degree. Second, the Inuit have been resourceful, and determined to attack these problems before they become unmanagable. For instance, they have embarked on a quiet campaign of using institutions to further their own end. John Amagoalik, the President of the Inuit Tapirisat, remarked to the N.W.T. Council in 1980 that it was naive to pin all hopes of social change on a land claims settlement, when many changes should be accomplished through the present Government as a matter of fundamental right. In three related areas – education, language and communications – the Inuit have been pushing Government institutions into serving them rather than dominating them, and with a fair measure of success.

(A) Education: Historically, the Government's attitude to education was characterized by the same reluctance to make a policy that informed its other dealings with the Inuit. It did not start building schools in the N.W.T. until the late 1940s, and before that time was happy to turn over the responsibility for education to the various missions, mainly Anglican and Catholic, which got a Government subsidy for building schools and residences. The missions did not reach many of the Inuit though (in 1944 it was established that over 80% of Inuit children were not being taught in schools), and were a mixed blessing for those they did reach. The mission schools were lonely and terrifying places for native children. They were taken away from their families, taught in foreign ways and in a foreign language, and in many cases were forbidden to speak their own language. Many missions treated them with great severity, and punishments were harsh.

When the Government did start building schools, the situation did not improve much for the children. Because many families still lived on the land, the schools were of necessity residential. The children would be collected from the scattered camps by airplane in the autumn, would spend the winter in school and would be delivered back to their parents in the spring. The Government schools were more moderate than those run by missionaries, but their policies were cut from the same cloth. Their intent was to assimilate Inuit into the mainstream culture, to prepare these children to play a part in a foreign world. They assumed that the Arctic was an inhospitable land that could not support a growing population, and that the only hope of the Inuit lay in migrating to the south. To this end, instruction in the schools was in English or French, and the curricula were imported whole from the southern provinces. There was no teaching done in the native languages.

The system had two effects. First, it drew the Inuit away from their camps towards the newly-established settlements, to be near their children. The Inuit were still too much in awe of the authority of the white man to refuse to allow their children to be taken from them. The second effect was to create a gap between the generations. Those sent away to school were drawn increasingly towards the white world. They learned a new language, new habits of diet and hygiene, new attitudes. They become caught in the disorienting trap of the colonial system: the only hope of salvation lay in adapting, in trying to become white, and yet they were continually being measured and coming up short of this goal. They were taught that to be native was to be bad, and since their parents were more native than the children, they must be worse. Some children come to occupy a tragic no-man's-land between the white culture which

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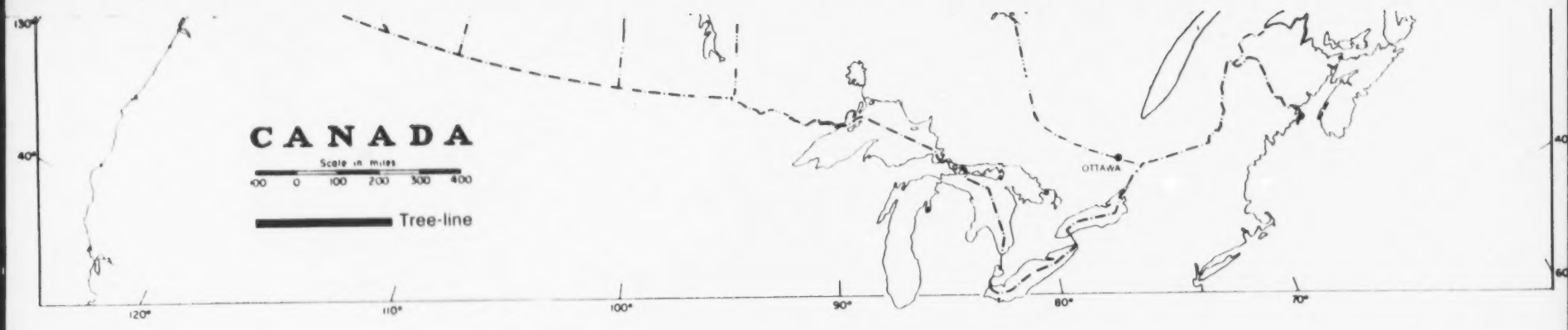

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would never fully accept them, and their parents' culture which was no longer appealing. At the time when the Government was finally reconsidering this policy, a parent remarked:

'It was far too late when they did start asking Eskimo parents to become involved in teaching, so the present young people have only learnt some white ways. Now they are like lost people.'

The policy of assimilation only started to change after the N.W.T. Government was established in Yellowknife in 1967. In the early 1970s, individuals in the Department of Education pressed for native language teaching in schools, and for inclusion of materials relevant to the Inuit culture in the curriculum. Some halting steps were taken in this direction: the first Inuit teacher graduated in 1972, and a 'cultural inclusion' programme was set up in some schools. This meant that older Inuit would come into the schools regularly to teach the boys how to build *qamutiit* (wooden sleds), and the girls how to sew *kamiks* (seal-skin boots). This programme had only limited success, because it was not associated with a systematic attempt to rework the approach to education. Further advances were resisted, because the Department of Education feared that the overall standards of education, measured against southern standards, would fall.

Right from the beginning, Inuit parents had seen the schools as white institutions that they could have no influence over. As the schools' power spread, parents gave up more and more the task of bringing up their children, thus increasing the sense of dislocation in the family. However, the awakening of political consciousness in the mid-1970s focused attention on education. Pressure began to mount for real changes, and slowly the Department of Education responded. The native peoples' new-found control of the bureaucracy, gaind in the N.W.T. Council elections of October 1979, made a systematic analysis of education possible. A special Committee took a year to perform this task, and set new goals for the system.

The Special Committee recommended: a) that control of education be decentralized to allow local school committees a greater say, through the creation of regional elected boards of education; b) that the Government support the use of native languages in the schools through a stepped-up programme of training native teachers, and the development of relevant curricula in the native languages; c) that the system of adult education be vastly improved.

The Special Committee report encouraged schools in many areas to respond to local wishes. For instance, it had long been the case that in the long days of spring, children spent most of their time outdoors, and they would also go camping on the land with their parents. Attendance at school would drop 10% or more every spring. Some schools saw the value of an education on the land, and incorporated the camp cycle into the last two weeks of school, allowing pupils and teachers to go out on the land to learn from the older Inuit.

There are other signs that the educational system is returning to health. Since 1980, a teacher education programme in Frobisher Bay has been training Inuit to be teachers, with a budget that in 1983-84 will reach $1 million. Thirty-seven of the 359 teachers in Inuit schools have graduated from the programme. In addition the Department of Education now allows classroom assistants, whose work with teachers from the south was never given due credit, to obtain a teaching diploma by doing most of the course work in their home communities.

The number of native students going on to post-secondary education has jumped from 16 in 1978-79 to 154 in 1983-84. There has also been a tremendous upsurge of interest in adult education programmes, which have been redesigned and given increased funding to provide training for employment as well as academic upgrading. A $1 million Indigenous Language Development Fund was created in 1983, and education committees throughout the N.W.T. are using the money to develop language teaching programmes in the schools, and to design curricula for their region.

In the 1970s many Inuit parents had come to believe Government assertions that only through an education in English could their sons and daughters fit into the new society. Now that Inuit teachers have shown them that it is possible to learn such subjects as mathematics and history in Inuktitut without any loss of academic standard, they hope that an innovative educational system can be developed to function in native languages as well as English.

(B) Communications: The spread of broadcast communications to the Arctic has always had the potential to be the most destructive force acting on Inuit culture. Again, the Inuit have been quick to realize this, and are now engaged in a difficult struggle both to stem the tide of proliferation of radio and television in the north, and to appropriate what there is for their own uses.

The Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, Canada's national system, took an interest in the north at the same time as many Government departments, and in 1958 set up its Northern Service, broadcasting on shortwave radio. Right from the beginning, it made efforts to generate as much native language programming as possible, but the lack of native speakers willing to move to the transmission headquarters in the south was a problem. Real progress was not made until CBC stations were set up in the north in the 1960s. In 1972, Canada's first domestic communications satellite went into operation. It was called Anik A, from the Inuit word for brother, and was followed by Anik B in 1978 and C and D in 1982. The satellites meant good quality A.M. radio reception, and most settlements were provided with the equipment to receive the signals. Suddenly Inuit across the north were linked by radio, and they demanded more Inuktitut programmes from the Northern Service. It responded to the challenge, and today CBC stations at Inuvik, Rankin Inlet and Frobisher Bay produce Inuktitut and bilingual English-Inuktitut programmes for their listeners, as well as relaying a certain amount of national CBC English-language programming. For example, the Frobisher Bay and Rankin Inlet stations combine to produce over 60 hours of Inuktitut or bilingual programmes per week, or about 45% of the total hours broadcast.

This was not achieved without trauma. The Northern Service provided the classic example of well-meaning southerners who had not systematically considered how Inuit broadcasting could develop. Their policy was vague and confused; Inuit hired to become broadcasters found they got almost no training, and were expected to function as translators of English programme material. Rosemarie Kuptana, an Inuk announcer with CBC Inuvik, commented in 1980:

'. . . the native broadcaster merely becomes a clone of the English Language Announcer, spreading news written by and for the already dominated southern culture . . . what actually is practised is a kind of colonialism.'

The CBC was forced to re-evaluate its entire Northern operation, and to do more than pay lip service to native programming. Inuit producers now generate more and more of their own material, covering current affairs, cultural activities and sports.

A more serious threat to Inuit culture came with the extension of southern television service to the north in the early 1970s. At first confined to major centres, by 1982 the national CBC television service was being received in most Arctic settlements. The CBC service started broadcasting over 100 hours a week to Inuit homes, entirely in English, although over half of those Inuit could not understand English. The Inuit were quick to perceive the divisive effort of TV on their families and on their society, and reacted strongly. They made submissions to the Canadian Radio, Television and Telecommunications Commission, the national regulatory body, asking for more control of the medium and for Inuktitut programming to be made available. In 1975 the Inuit Tapirisat of Canada proposed the Inukshuk project, to make Inuktitut TV programmes for satellite distribution, and to experiment with two-way inter-settlement communication via TV. The project ran for six months, using the experimental Anik B satellite to link six communities. It was so successful that it led to the creation of the Inuit Broadcasting Corporation, which has been in production since 1981. The IBC now produces five hours a week of Inuktitut programming out of five production centres across the north, running on Government funding of over $1 million a year. There have been many difficulties: the IBC gets air time on the CBC satellite channel, and so is not a top priority. Until recently all its programming was aired late at night, and even to date it has only managed to secure one hour per week of early evening 'prime time'. It cannot afford its own satellite channel, and is coping with inadequate facilities and production crews that are learning as they go. In addition, commercial satellite receiving dishes have proliferated, and so some communities now also receive commercial American and Canadian TV channels that have no native programming. The Inuit have consistently opposed this, but the Canadian Radio, Television and Telecommunications Commission has been under pressure from the other side, and what has emerged is a compromise that allows for more channels in a regulated way, provided that access to them be permitted to native groups. So far the IBC has had its hands full coping with its present

responsibilities, and its budget is small by television standards. However, there is no doubt that it will grow, and that its programming will diversify. It has proposed a $400,000 childrens' programme, and other plans are in the works. There is also much interest in a circumpolar Inuit network, and although this possibility is far off the IBC could play an important role in getting it going. In the meanwhile, it will press for a better arrangement for satellite air time, and will extend its production services to the Labrador and the western Arctic.

(C) Language: It should be stated first that, although the Inuit population is not large, Inuit languages have never been in danger of disappearing. Some dialects have been weakened considerably, but a regenerative movement in recent years has halted this erosion, and in some areas the languages are making a comeback.

One main language, Yupik, is spoken in southwest Alaska by about 18,000 Inuit. The other, Inupiaq, is spoken from northern Alaska right across to Greenland by about 66,000 Inuit. Yupik and Inupiaq speakers recognize the common origins of their languages, but cannot understand each other. There are many dialects of Inupiaq, reducible to perhaps ten main ones. Comprehension of other dialects diminishes the further a speaker gets from his or her dialect area but, for example, Canadian Inuit from the Beaufort Sea can communicate with Greenlanders. The Canadian Inuit call their language Inuktitut (literally, like the Inuit).

The Inuit had an oral tradition, and Inuktitut did not have a written form until the arrival of southerners. Because the circumpolar Arctic was colonized at different times and by different peoples, this is reflected in the history of the development of writing systems. The Greenlanders were writing a romanized script by the middle of the 18th century, whereas Canadian Inuit were not writing until the end of the 19th century, when the Reverend Peck, an Anglican missionary, transported to the eastern Arctic a syllabic writing system, using arbitrary characters to represent whole syllables, which had originally been developed for use by the Ojibway Indians. In the western Arctic, other missionaries developed their own roman scripts for the language. The various systems were used to translate the bible, but they made literate virtually a whole population in a fairly short time. It is interesting to note that the native population was then more literate than most of the white men that arrived in the north. It is curious, however, that the missionaries who taught the Inuit to read and write, and so played an important part in strengthening the language for the modern world, were the same ones who forbade Inuit children from speaking their language in the mission schools.

As Inuit started the move into settlements, they constituted a semi-literate population with virtually no literature apart from religious materials. It was still rare to find Inuit who could speak English, but already the schools were having an effect. The southern culture was poised for a massive invasion of the Arctic, and the Inuit faced a double challenge: could they successfully make the transition from an oral culture to a literate one, with the standardization of script and the creation of a literature that this implied; and could they strengthen and standardize the dialects of Inuktitut to move towards a pan-Canadian Inuit language (and perhaps ultimately a circumpolar Inuktitut)?

In the 1950s Government officials and Inuit recognized the need for reform of the various writing systems, but the Inuit were not organized to do anything about it. In 1960 the Government hired a linguist, Raymond Gagne, to create a standard orthography. He favoured an alphabetic system using roman letters, and recommended dropping the syllabic system. He devised a roman orthography which was logical and easy to learn, but the scheme was not implemented properly. All the Inuit using syllabics had been taught by the church, and interpreted Gagne's recommendation as an attempt to undermine the influence of the church. They had grown attached to the system, and did consider it a true Inuit form of writing. There were also fears that the proposal for change was an attempt to change the language itself, so Gagne's work did not take hold.

The Inuit still wanted reform, and in 1974 the Inuit Tapirisat of Canada set up the Inuit Language Commission, headed by Jose Kusugak from Rankin Inlet. The Commission embarked on consultation in most of the Inuit communities, and took into account all the questions that Gagne had not. The message came back that Inuit did not want to abandon the system they were familiar with, whether roman or syllabics. The Commission's answer was to develop a dual orthography by reforming and matching up the roman and syllabics systems so they could be used interchangeably. The reforms to the two systems are gaining acceptance gradually, aided by their adoption for writing the growing Inuktitut curricula in the schools.

The dual orthography has made possible the development of an Inuit literature, but it is hard to say how long that will take. All early writing in Inuktitut was religious, and to date very few books of a non-religious character have been written. However, Government publications in Inuktitut, Inuit cultural and news reports, and translations of Greenlandic Inuktitut as well as of English literature are gradually increasing the amount of material available.

At the international level, Inuit have expressed hope that a pan-Inuit writing system and language could be developed, but that does not seem possible yet. Inuit groups in Canada, at least, are determined to retain the dialects that preserve their identity, and there could be no agreement as yet on which dialect would become the base for a 'standard Inuktitut'. However, people speaking different dialects are starting to understand each other better, due to the spread of Inuit radio and the great number of meetings Inuit travel to in different areas each year. In Canada the success of Inuit TV will encourage this trend, and in the future the creation of a 'standard Inuktitut' should be possible.

In Canada, the Inuit language is evolving rapidly. Prior to Inuit efforts to reform and protect their language, it was being steadily eroded by the influx of southerners, and by English teaching in the schools. The move off the land into settlements, and the change in hunting technology rendered obsolete many old technical terms. More important though, the new rythm of life and changing relationships in the society forced the old language to adapt to keep up. Today, the young do not understand old Inuit when they revert to the old Inuktitut. And yet, the language is not withering. Old hunting terms are being replaced with Inuktitut words invented to describe the new technology. For instance, 'satellite' is *'qangattaqtitausimajuq'*, meaning 'it has been made to fly'. Inuit concerned with the language, educators, interpreters and cultural workers, meet regularly to standardize the new terminology, and the results are stored in computers. The old language has not been forgotten, and is often drawn on to provide new words. In areas where Inuktitut has come under serious attack, such as the western Arctic, Inuit organizations have started programmes to rebuild the language and to entrench its use in the schools and in the media.

8. THE AFTERMATH OF JAMES BAY

We have seen that the Inuit of the N.W.T. have gone through great changes in two decades, but have recovered from a brief period of disorientation to engage in a struggle for power over their own lives. How does their situation compare with that of their fellow Inuit in northern Quebec?

The Cree and the Inuit of James Bay are unique in that they are the beneficiaries of the first major modern land claims agreement negotiated by a Canadian Government. The James Bay Agreement now plays the most important part in their lives, and they have had increasing problems with it.

The situation of the Quebec Inuit was complicated by their inclusion in the province in 1912. The provincial Government did not take up its responsibilities for the Inuit until 1963, and until then they were administered entirely by the federal Government. As of 1963, they had to deal with two levels of government, one speaking English and the other French. The Inuit also became caught in the middle of federal-provincial arguments over responsibilities and finances, and suffered accordingly.

The James Bay Agreement came about for the same reason that the treaties were signed with Canada's Indians in the late 1800s – the Quebec Government needed the land quickly and had to obtain title from the Cree and Inuit. The Agreement was negotiated in extreme haste, and negotiators worked to deadlines imposed by the hydro-electric companies and the courts. The result was that many sections of the Agreement were vague, and left vast latitude for interpretation of how they would be implemented.

The first few years after the signing of the Agreement were occupied with the mechanics of selecting land for Inuit ownership, and with

setting up such structures as a regional government and a regional school board. In November 1976 a nationalist government, the Parti Quebecois, came into office in Quebec, and soon clashed with the Inuit. The Parti Quebecois advocated a new constitutional relationship with the rest of Canada, called sovereignty-association, which came close to demanding outright separation from Canada. The party maintained the right of Quebeckers to self-determination, which it interpreted as making Quebec completely French-speaking, and it passed Bill 101 to restrict the use of English in the province. The Inuit had been educated in English in federal schools, and were alarmed by the effect Bill 101 would have on their society. They protested massively, forcing the closure of some schools and Government offices in northern Quebec. The Quebec Government responded by sending riot police to some communities, and although no clashes developed, it was a clear warning that Quebec self-determination was not Inuit self-determination.

In areas of the Agreement where the Inuit had the most responsibility, they made rapid progress. For instance, they set up Makivik Development Corporation, which was soon successfully running an airline in northern Quebec, called Air Inuit, and a shrimp fishery employing Inuit trained by Greenlanders. In areas of joint Inuit-Government responsibility, particularly involving Quebec, implementation of the Agreement was slowed down and in some cases halted. One of the problems was that the Agreement had not guaranteed funding levels for organizations like the regional school board, which had to compete with other Quebec school boards for its budget from the Quebec Government. The Inuit accused the provincial Government of interpreting the Agreement in an obstructive way, focusing on its details rather than on its spirit. Budgetary problems were continuing to hamper Inuit efforts to make the Agreement work. A big problem was a feeling in Government that it had made the native peoples rich, and they no longer needed programmes and services to which they were still in fact entitled. Notably in health care, standards actually dropped after the signing of the Agreement, and are only now recovering. In addition, the $225 million cash payment to be shared between the Cree and the Inuit was to be paid out in instalments until 1977, rendering its actual value between $86.8 and $171.9 million because of inflation and other factors.

The Inuit eventually took their grievances to a committee of the Canadian Parliament in March 1981. The evidence they gave so embarrassed the Federal Government that it immediately ordered a review of its responsibilities in the implementation of the Agreement. In February 1982 the review committee agreed that there were serious problems, notably in areas that had been hastily and vaguely drafted. The Federal Government then committed some funds to improve its own performance, and agreed to honour the spirit of the Agreement in a more constructive way. To date the Quebec Government has not participated in any reviews, and relations between it and the Inuit are still strained.

One other consequence of the speed with which the Agreement was drawn up was that Inuit in many communities could not be fully consulted by their negotiators. The negotiators had obtained permission from all communities to represent them, but after the signing of the Agreement, Inuit in three settlements became upset because their aboriginal rights had been given up in exchange for the benefit package, and rejected the Agreement. The split was painful for all Quebec Inuit, and still exists today. The Inuit are now lobbying to have their rights restored to them, but it is not known if they will succeed.

Many Inuit have been bitter about the way the Agreement was forced on them, and feel that they got a poor deal, that it is in fact a modern-day 'beads and blankets' treaty. However, they have put all their effort into making what they do have work, and in some areas have been successful. The battles over implementation will continue for some time. In the meantime, the northern Quebec Inuit contribute to the national Inuit movement, where their political experience has made them tough negotiators on the Canadian constitutional issues that have occupied Inuit leaders for the past two years.

9. LABRADOR AND THE WESTERN ARCTIC

The course of development in Labrador and the western Arctic has been different than in more central areas of Inuit population in Canada. These two regions have always been more appealing to white men than the rest of the Arctic: they were closest to the advancing population of settlers and, occupying the transitional zone between tundra and forest, their climates and topography were more familiar to settlers than the true Arctic. It was also easier to make a living there, fishing for cod in Labrador, and whaling and trapping in the Mackenzie Delta. The impact on Inuit populations there was correspondingly greater than in other regions.

Labrador was colonized in 1770 by the Moravian missionaries, who had already established a presence in Greenland. They converted the Inuit, and traded with them to pay for the expense of running the missions. According to northern historian Keith Crowe, they used their missions to change Inuit ways so they could survive in a European society. They traded only essential goods, kept liquor out of the territory, and encouraged the Inuit to fish in a European style. By 1840, their educational efforts had resulted in almost all of the Inuit being able to read and write the Roman script of the Moravians. The missionaries also trained teachers, and right up to 1949, when Newfoundland and Labrador joined Canada, all school was taught in Inuktitut. In the 1800s, white settlers had already begun to make their homes in Labrador, and by 1900 there were 3,000 fishermen, most of them settlers. The newcomers were by and large not converted by the Moravians, and as a result could not attend their schools, the only ones on the coast. The protective influence of the missionaries waned as the southern ways of the settlers took hold. There was some intermarriage between Inuit and settlers, but both groups retained a sense of pride in their origins and identity. They both lived from the resources of the land and so had similar economic systems, but each group had its special methods, technology and knowledge of the land. According to a study of land use by Hugh Brody, Inuit and settlers had distinct hunting and trapping areas, with minimal overlapping, and they respected each other, as befitting people who knew the difficulties of survival on the coast.

Life had always been hard, and the Inuit had experienced their share of disease and starvation. Their inclusion in Canada as a part of Newfoundland did not help much. Newfoundland was a poor province with a disinclination to spend any of its money on Labrador, and its people were denied the quality of housing, health care and municipal services that the Inuit of the N.W.T. were getting. What little assistance there was had to come from the Federal Government: until 1974 at least, it had provided 90% of all the money spent on native people in Labrador. The Newfoundland Government was also reluctant to consider the question of aboriginal rights: long after the Federal Government had admitted these rights existed in 1973, Newfoundland refused to admit that the native people could have special status. A Labrador Inuit Association was formed, and in 1978 submitted a proposal for the settlement of claims to the Federal Government, demanding rights to land, compensation, and management powers over resources and for regional government. The Newfoundland Government has agreed to be present at the negotiations of this proposal, but relations between it and the Federal Government have been so strained recently, that this could affect the speed and nature of a settlement.

White men came later to the western Arctic than to the east coast, but when they did change was rapid and devastating to the Inuit. The whaling industry got into full swing in 1890, bringing large numbers of white men, as well as Alaskan Inuit who had learned the whaling trade. Winter camps were set up in and about the Beaufort Sea. The whalers were a rough, drinking lot, and the diseases they brought as well as liquor-influenced killings decimated the Inuit. By 1910, the population of 2,000 Mackenzie Inuit had been reduced to about 130. The fur boom of the 1920s attracted many trappers of all races from the south, and there was some intermarriage. Fur prices brought great affluence to the west, even during the 1930s and 1940s that were so disastrous for Inuit in other areas, the western Arctic was spared the worst, due to an abundance of some kinds of fur that still sold well. The cultural pressure from the large white population accelerated the change in Inuit society, and many Inuit became fluent in English. The fur trade gave way eventually to oil and gas development, and it was in response to this that the Committee for Original Peoples Entitlement was formed. COPE had been a major force in the national Inuit organization, the Inuit Tapirisat of Canada, and strongly supported the first ITC land claims proposal. COPE did not agree with the ITC radicals who began to see the proposal as a sellout, and finally split with the ITC over its decision to withdraw the document from negotiations with

the Federal Government. COPE tailored the offending proposal to suit the western Arctic, and submitted it to the Government on its own. After negotiations, the Government agreed to the proposal in principle, then changed its mind, fearing it had been too generous. The two sides are now re-negotiating the agreement. The COPE proposal is similar to the James Bay Agreement, with the addition of features giving the Inuit additional political powers. At the time of the debate on the division of the N.W.T., COPE refused to commit itself to either new territory, but has since stated that western Arctic Inuit favour participation in the eastern territory, Nunavut.

The Inuit of the west have not had the same protections as those in other regions, and accordingly their culture has suffered greatly. However, the general renaissance of Inuit culture pride has caught on in the west, and efforts are underway to reverse the trend towards assimilation with the southern society. Inuit society as a whole is strong enough that there is every reason these efforts should succeed.

10. THE ECONOMY

The traditional economy of the Inuit was organized around camps, where a few related families produced and circulated amongst themselves all they needed for survival. The harshness of the environment was a factor in the egalitarian character of the society: if anyone had accumulated wealth at the expense of others this would have threatened the whole group.

This way of life started to change with the influence of the whalers in the 19th century. The respected author Hugh Brody remarks that what Inuit today call their traditional economy was actually a mixed economy, involving some hunting, some trapping, occasional work for wages with the white people, and trading for such staple goods as guns, flour and tea. These activities did not force great changes on Inuit society, because they were land-based and allowed the camps to function as they always had. However, trade led to an increase in the standard of living and a greater dependency on southern goods. The dramatic drop in fur prices in the 1940s, which created much hardship, was in itself not critical. However, prices of trade goods had continued to rise, and the Inuit had no other source of income to pay for them. The crisis occurred when the animals they hunted for food temporarily disappeared, and the resulting starvation started the move off the land into settlements.

The move away from the hunting grounds further weakened the land-based economy. It increased the amount of travelling the hunters had to do, and the advent of motorized transport in the 1960s meant greater costs. The introduction of government assistance in the form of old-age pensions, child allowances and welfare started to weaken social bonds. These welfare payments were made to individual families, thus creating disparities in wealth and undermining the tradition of sharing. The economist Michael Asch has called this process the individualization of poverty; and yet the Inuit have generally not absorbed the debilitating attitudes that the welfare economy tends to produce, and that entrench poverty. They have survived in the Arctic owing to a readiness to seize opportunity – to wait for hours at a breathing-hole for one chance to harpoon a seal, for instance. Welfare payments represent modern-day opportunities to be taken advantage of, without stigma if they succeed and without rancour if they fail. There is no doubt Inuit have needed welfare to survive the transition from the land, but have not so far become dependent on it. Its main function has been to subsidize hunting and trapping, although not designed to do so, and hunters now want a direct subsidy of their activities that would avoid the traps inherent in welfare.

The Canadian Government's answer to these problems has been to emphasize the role of the wage economy, largely through the extraction of non-renewable resources. Historically, the exploitation of frontier resources provided the foundation for growth of the Canadian economy, and the north is today the last frontier. Canada is still dependent on resources to a large degree, and the need to exploit the frontier remains. The extraction of Arctic resources, oil, gas and minerals, relies on a core of skilled workers and experts who travel the country from project to project, aided by cheap unskilled labour hired for the setting up of the extractive process. At first, the lack of education of the Inuit made them unsuitable for all but the most unskilled jobs, and the companies did not want to pay enormous training costs for people who could not move to projects in other parts of the country, as experience had already shown. Thus wage labour took Inuit away from hunting and discouraged the learning of land-based skills, but without replacing them with industrial skills. Rather than creating 'development', this process was leading to under-development.

The Federal Government attempted to improve the situation by starting its own industrial training schemes for Inuit, and by educating the companies about cross-cultural problems that had made them unwilling to hire Inuit workers. It induced the companies to set up job-rotation plans so that native workers could visit their families frequently. The Government also attempted to maximize the benefits to northerners of development. For instance, it only agreed to the opening of the Nanisivik lead-zinc mine on Baffin Island, on condition that the company slow down production to increase the life of the ore body from six to twelve years. It set a quota for Inuit workers that the company should aim for. In spite of all these efforts, numbers of Inuit employed in the resource industries have remained small and the benefits have not materialized.

The Government itself has been the main source of employment for Inuit. The extension of services to the north has brought with it a bureaucracy which provides a large percentage of the income in many settlements. The Government has been determined to 'Inuit-ize' the bureaucracy, and this has been possible in the smaller settlements where the workers have remained a part of a strong Inuit society. In regional centres the influence of southern culture is still strong, and the Inuit perceive the administration to be owned by whites. The increasing quality of education, and the revitalizing of Inuit society will eventually result in a native bureaucracy here too. However, Government cannot hope to employ everyone. Census results show that, in the Baffin Region alone, 173 people will join the work force annually until the year 2000, enough to staff a new mine like Nanisivik every year. Other solutions will have to be found.

In spite of Government efforts to involve them in wage labour, Inuit have stubbornly refused to give up their feeling for the land and for the land-based, renewable resources economy. In looking into the impact of the Mackenzie Valley pipeline, Justice Berger acknowledged this:

'Native people consider renewable resources, particularly fur, fish, game and timber, to be essential to their way of life. These resources must be the cornerstone of native economic development, and neither the initiatives nor the benefits can be appropriated by others.'

The Federal Government has never made a serious attempt to make the renewable resource economy into a viable operation. Various efforts were made to domesticate caribou, to herd reindeer, even to raise southern farm animals such as pigs and chicken, in the Arctic. The results were often hilarious but nearly always disastrous. The marketing of Inuit crafts has been strikingly successful, and soapstone carving and printmaking have been an increasingly good source of income for some.* However, the Government has done very little to organize and support hunting and trapping, which are fundamental to a successful land-based way of life.

Seal hunting provides a good example of an activity which was traditionally important for survival, but which is now being threatened by changing economic circumstances. In the old days the hunter's ability to kill seals at the breathing-hole in winter was often the only protection against starvation, and the carcases were utilized down to the last scrap of fat and fur. The Inuit hunted seals at all seasons, and had a precise understanding of their habits and biology. As the commercial seal fur market developed in the 1940s, the hunters began to sell sealskins to help pay for their equipment. However, the income from this has only served to subsidize the harvesting of seal meat that is still a staple in the diet of many communities, and has only rarely provided any profit at all. In most areas, hunting and trapping do not pay their way: social scientist Bill Kemp studied one community where the sale of hunting and trapping products only accounted for one-third of the cash needed for hunting equipment. Because there is no commercial market for

* *Vide* Nelson Graburn of Berkeley. Jonathan Benthall comments: 'The Inuit have become a major rallying-point for Canadian national identity, a subject about which many Canadians perpetually agonize. They have a cultural problem of how to differentiate themselves from the United States, which has American Indians too – but no Inuit except in Alaska which is extraterritorial. Inuit crafts are being used as a way of identifying Canada at trade fairs, etc. This fact should present the Inuit with a political opportunity.'

seal meat, hunters have had to rely more and more on the sale of skins to keep pace with rising costs. They have always had to sell them to southern Canadian companies, to meet demand created in North America and Europe by consumers far from Inuit homes. Hunters have thus been vulnerable to changes in the market caused by consumer pressure, such as the anti-seal hunt campaign in Europe.

The Inuit seal hunt is truly a subsistence activity, as compared to the much-publicized commercial seal-pup harvest in other parts of Canada. Inuit hunters disagree with commercial culling methods, and have felt victimized by the European sealskin ban. The economic consequences of the ban have been drastic – the loss of income is forcing some Inuit to give up hunting. Sealskin prices are now less than half of what they were two years ago, and last year one hunter was offered $0.50 for a skin that might have been worth $20 the year before. Inuit have lobbied in the European Parliament for an exception to the ban, but without success.

It is possible to create a local and regional economy based on the products of the hunt, which would allow the hunters greater self-sufficiency. The Inuit are now urging the Government to consider ways of doing this: to support the land-based economy in a systematic way. Greenland has done just that, instituting a system of distribution and secondary processing of the products of the hunt to provide many jobs. It is unrealistic to expect renewable resources to provide total employment. However, a mixed economy founded on land-based activities, which are supplemented by wage labour and occasional subsidies would serve the Inuit well. They know their survival as a people depends on maintaining their relationship with the land, and so Government support of the mixed economy would not only provide employment, but would relieve social problems that a reliance on industrial labour only exacerbates.

11. THE FUTURE

Older Inuit have said that the move into settlements deceived them into thinking their troubles were over. Life on the land had been a constant struggle just to survive, pitting mental and physical resources against an implacable environment. The new towns made the conditions of life much more pleasant; the houses were always heated, and no one lacked for food. In fact, the Inuit came to realize that the struggle for survival was to continue as a fight to maintain their identity and values. The Inuit have spent the 1970s marshalling the weapons they need, and have learnt how to use them. They now seek nothing less than a complete re-evaluation and re-structuring of their relationship with Canada, and have pushed the Government to the point of considering this.

Government policy towards native people has changed direction from time to time since 1867, but has always been characterized by a refusal to give Inuit and Indians responsibility for their own lives. Government has exercised a parental authority over them, and has treated them as adolescents, still innocent in a cruel world and unable to control their instincts. It has considered them 'wards', to be protected from themselves and from others. This attitude has persisted to the modern day. For instance, native people were only given the right to vote in federal elections in 1960. Furthermore, the only way of attaining responsible 'adulthood' has been to assimilate into the greater Canadian society.

The treaties which appropriated native land for Canada served two purposes: first, they encouraged the assimilation of native people by taking away the land base central to their culture, and second, they provided access to the resources to fuel Canada's economic growth. A century later, it was obvious that the Government policy of promising responsibility through assimilation had failed: the native people stubbornly refused to assimilate and were becoming increasingly angry and militant. The Government White Paper of 1969 represented another attempt to find solutions, but it was still based on the notion that native people had no special rights which entitled them to anything different from other Canadians. The Nishga Indian court case of 1973 forced the Government to reconsider. However, the now-legitimate concept of aboriginal rights represented different things to both sides. The courts had not specified what aboriginal rights were, and neither side wanted to test them legally for fear of losing ground. The Government interpreted them as rights to the use of land for subsistence, and named the extinguishment of aboriginal rights as a condition of the settlement of land claims. This would wipe out the uncertainty and injustice of Government policy of the past 100 years, and would reduce native rights to legal interpretations of modern-day treaties. The 'native problem' would be solved once and for all. On the other hand, the native people considered aboriginal rights to mean no less than the right to self-determination, and saw the guarantee of these rights to be the beginning of a new relationship with Canada.

For the Inuit, the struggle over which interpretation would take effect has been carried out on two fronts: land claims and constitutional negotiations.

(i) Land Claims: Apart from the unfortunate James Bay Agreement, the Inuit have refused to surrender their rights. They want them entrenched in any agreement with the Government, in the form of the right to self-determination. From this premise have come the Inuit demands:

a) They want the creation of a new territory, Nunavut, which would stretch north from the treeline to include all above it. Now that the idea has been accepted by the Federal Government, a Nunavut Constitutional Forum appointed by the N.W.T. Council has drawn up plans for the new territory. In the vital area of development, Nunavut would press for greater responsibility in land and offshore management, to balance the interests of development companies against the interests of those favouring a renewable-resource economy. The territory would also take a share of the Federal Government's royalties on oil, gas and mineral production. The Nunavut Constitutional Forum has proposed provincial-type responsibilities in the areas of social policy, health, housing and the control of labour to avoid the social problems caused by the influx of large numbers of transient workers.

b) In addition to the powers that public government would provide, the Inuit want a direct share, through Inuit organizations, of management powers over wildlife and land, including marine areas important for subsistence hunting.

c) They want to be granted outright ownership of some land. Exact figures have not yet been named, but there is no doubt that they want much more land than the Government has ever given to a native group. This would include ownership of the resources on and under the land.

d) They seek compensation for past wrongs through royalties on resource development and cash payments from the Government, to allow them to participate in the economic future of the new territory.

It is to the credit of the Canadian Government that it has embarked on this negotiated process of settling claims at all, and it represents a commitment that not many governments with aboriginal populations have been ready to make. Of course it has been in its own interest to do so, but it could have adopted a more heavy-handed approach to solving the problem. It has funded native groups with many millions of dollars to develop their proposals, although much of this money must be repaid when a settlement is reached. However, it has on occasion manipulated the direction some native groups were taking by withholding these funds, a tactic that has earned it criticism.

The Inuit of the N.W.T. know from their negotiations that the Federal Government has tried to limit settlements to the James Bay precedent, but is starting to give ground. The big difficulty has always been the sharing of management powers with Inuit organizations. First the Government Office of Native Claims had to be convinced that this was a good thing, and then it in turn had to persuade other Government departments to give up some of their power. For instance, the Inuit and the Office of Native Claims had agreed in principle to a Nunavat Wildlife Management Board with Inuit and Government having equal representation, subject to the deciding vote of a federally-appointed chairman. Other departments whose jurisdiction was affected suddenly got edgy, and the Government had to back out of its commitment. The Office of Native Claims is currently engaged in a series of battles within the Government to obtain this kind of management-sharing arrangement for the Inuit, and inside sources say that there is a good possibility it will succeed. Whatever the outcome, it will determine to a large extent the shape of the land claims settlement.

(ii) The constitution: In the area of constitutional negotiations, the Inuit have played an important part in fighting for the entrenchment of aboriginal rights in the new Canadian constitution. The Prime Minister of Canada, Pierre Trudeau, had been determined to patriate Canada's constitution from Great Britain and to add a

charter of rights, during his time in office. After having tried repeatedly to obtain agreement from Canada's provinces to do this without success, he finally decided to do so unilaterally. Native leaders demanded that the proposed charter of rights contain protection of aboriginal rights, knowing that it would be next to impossible to amend the charter to include such a provision once the constitution had been adopted. After extensive lobbying by native organizations, the Federal Government agreed to insert a clause protecting 'existing' rights, only to drop it again in federal-provincial negotiations to make the proposed constitution acceptable to the provinces. The native people were infuriated, and mounted a strong campaign to have it re-inserted that gained much public support. On this issue, the Inuit occupied a middle ground between the Federal Government and many Indian groups whose demands were more extreme. They were instrumental in reaching a compromise that led to the clause being reinstated into the constitution, along with a guarantee to hold a conference to define aboriginal rights.

In March 1983 the Federal Government convened such a conference with the provinces and native leaders, at which the participants could only agree to meet again to continue discussions. The difficulty had been provincial fears that attempts to specify aboriginal rights would involve them in added responsibilities, and would change the balance of power between themselves and the Federal Government. Native leaders were disappointed at the failure of the conference, but saw the educational value of having had it televised nationally. They had a Government commitment to continue negotiations from a basis of equality, and understood that the process had the potential to satisfy their demands. The next conference will take place in 1984.

At the national level, the Inuit revival is leading to a re-definition of their place in Canadian society. At the international level, the creation of the Inuit Circumpolar Conference has given the Inuit much to hope for.

The ICC was created in Barrow, Alaska in 1977 by Inuit from Alaska, Canada and Greenland, initially to represent the concerns of Alaskan and Canadian Inuit about oil and gas development in the Beaufort Sea. The ICC met again in Nuuk, Greenland in 1980, and most recently in Frobisher Bay, Canada in July of 1983, and has rapidly grown into an effective organization. In 1981, the ICC decided to help Canadian Inuit in their struggle to halt the Arctic Pilot Project, a proposal to ship liquefied natural gas from the Canadian high Arctic to southern Canada through Davis Strait in icebreaking tankers. The Inuit feared the environmental consequences of the APP, and were concerned that the Canadian Government's lack of a comprehensive northern policy would open the door to such projects to the detriment of Inuit. The ICC testified at the Canadian National Energy Board hearings into the APP, and succeeded in persuading the Board to postpone the hearings indefinitely, until the project was modified. In May 1983, the ICC was granted Non-Governmental Organization status at the United Nations, thus obtaining a great opportunity to influence world opinion on the Arctic. (One forum where it could in future participate is at the hearings of the new Working Group on Indigenous Peoples' Rights which has been established by the UN Human Rights Sub-Commission.) The ICC has attempted to persuade the USSR to let Siberian Inuit attend its meetings, but so far to no avail.

The ICC has already undertaken many initiatives to link the Inuit communities through economic and social programmes, and is preparing a circumpolar environmental policy. Links are being forged between broadcasting networks in the three countries, and at the Frobisher Bay meeting the Inuit Broadcasting Corporation of Canada aired 17 hours of coverage, part of which was transmitted by satellite to Greenland and Alaska. The ICC maintains that it does not intend to threaten the sovereignty of any Government over the Arctic, but the united voice of circumpolar Inuit has the potential to greatly influence national policy in the Arctic regions.

12. CONCLUSION

In the space of one generation, most Canadian Inuit have come from their traditional semi-nomadic hunting life on the tundra to the complexities of our present-day world. (There is now an Inuit M.P. for the Eastern Arctic, N.W.T.) They are a pragmatic people, persevering in adversity and implicitly understanding the ultimate value of human life. As it was in their traditional world, so it is in the modern world, that Inuit seize the opportunities presented to them in education, communications and self-government, without compromising their determination to maintain an independent Inuit society. The Canadian Government has certainly been confused and neglectful in its relations with the Inuit, but has at least never been guilty of malice in the way that some other North and South American Governments have been. Canada is now at the most favourable point in its history to settle native grievances in a just manner, and to establish the basis for a mutually beneficial relationship, which might serve as a lesson for other societies. Whether it does so remains to be seen.

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